

**City Council of the Mayor and Council of New Castle**  
**Special Council Meeting – Budget Workshop Session**  
**Community Room – Public Safety Building – 1 Municipal Boulevard – New Castle**  
**Thursday – May 20, 2010 – 6 p.m.**

**Present:**

Council President William Barthel  
Councilperson John Cochran  
Councilperson John Gaworski  
Councilperson Ted Megginson  
Councilperson Teel Petty

Also present: Treasurer Janet Carlin, City Administrator Cathryn Thomas, Finance/HR Director Marian Delaney, Tree Commission Chair Francis “Chip” Patterson

**Tree Commission Budget**

Tree Commission Chair Francis “Chip” Patterson reported that the Trustees of the New Castle Common have, for a number of years, provided funding to the Tree Commission. For at least 10 years, the funding has been at the level of \$20,000. This year, their request was for \$25,000, to provide an added \$5,000 so that a professional arborist could be hired.

When the Trustees approved organizations to whom they would be providing funding for this year, instead of earmarking \$20,000 or \$25,000 for the Tree Commission, they instead provided a new line of funding to the City entitled, “Greenscape Management”, in the amount of \$5,000.

The Tree Commission has been working on appearing before the Trustees to appeal their decision not to provide the level of funding they had received in the past. In the event they are unsuccessful, they are making a request to the City Council for an equivalent level of funding through the City Budget.

Council President Barthel asked about the general allotment the Tree Commission works with, versus any budget that they might prepare and propose for consideration. Mr. Patterson noted that the Tree Commission meets each month to review and prioritize where trees are in need of attention.

They normally spend up to \$15,000 each year on tree professionals addressing a variety of issues. They keep \$5,000 in reserve each year in the event of an emergency, such as the wind storm which caused significant tree damage throughout the City in the beginning of June, 2009. Mr. Patterson also pointed out that the total annual expense relative to street and public trees is well in excess of the \$15,000, as public works personnel perform some of the work, in addition to private contractors.

Mr. Patterson reported that the Tree Commission works quickly to respond to residents’ complaints about issues related to trees. An inventory taken a few years ago counted about 1,000 public/street trees for which the City is responsible.

Councilperson Petty asked if part of what the Tree Commission does includes addressing trees which are diseased. Mr. Patterson said that this is part of what they do, and that many elm trees had been injected to ward off disease.

**Recreation Budget**

Councilperson Petty presented the request for the Recreation budget. She noted that a \$750 grant from the Trustees would be used to enhance the activities on the final day of summer camp. Another donation the City received dedicated to recreation was from Mrs. Burroughs in the amount of \$50.

Councilperson Petty said the City has been building on past years, when the recreation program has been very successful and well-received by the participants and their parents. The format this year is the same as it has been, with a Recreation Coordinator hired through the University of Delaware program for interns.

The total budget request for the current year had been \$26,140. The request for the coming year is \$27,900, an increase of \$1,760. Council President Barthel asked about the line item for the Program Coordinator, noting that year-to-date only a portion of the budgeted amount had been expended. The reason for that is that the new Coordinator will start work on June 1, so one month's wages for that position will have to be paid out of the current budget.

### **Special Budget Requests**

Ms. Delaney reviewed what was entered into the budget for the appropriations approved to be provided to the City from the Trustees. It was clarified that the payment for the trash truck would be a five year lease/purchase, with payments being made annually.

City Council members reviewed the budget request from the Historic New Castle Alliance (HNCA). In the current budget, the City provided \$1,000 funding to the group. The request for the coming year is \$5,780, all proposed to be expended on a specific project. The project is a new, replacement kiosk near the intersection of Second and Delaware Streets.

Ms. Delaney noted the letter from the Arasapha Garden Club is requesting \$1,500 for the coming year, the same as which is budgeted in the current year. The Club buys materials and provides the expertise and labor for holiday decorations in the downtown area each December.

Ms. Charzetta English addressed the City Council on behalf of the Buttonwood Planning Committee. The group is requesting funding from the City in the amount of \$1,000 per month to cover operating expenses for the historic Buttonwood School.

Ms. English said that while this facility is located in the Buttonwood community, it is a place of interest for the entire New Castle community. This includes that anyone may reserve the facility for use.

She said that one of the challenges they have is that they still need a professional contractor to connect the kitchen range. She said there are also other electrical connections which need to be made by a professional electrician.

It was reported that currently, Mr. Gene Petty and Councilperson Teel Petty are paying the ongoing expenses, which include \$200 per month for a hydrant charge and \$200 a month for a sprinkler system charge, both paid to the Municipal Services Commission.

The last item discussed was a current issue of the City hiring a part-time Finance Clerk, which has been discussed a number of times in the past. Ms. Delaney said that Councilperson Cochran suggested the hours be a total of 32 per week, to equal four, eight-hour days. The Council concurred that a resolution pertaining to this issue could be added to the agenda for the special meeting of the City Council to be held on June 1.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathryn C. Thomas  
City Administrator